

HARLEM FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS

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RACE PREJUDICE IS VILE

By REV. PAUL HANLY FURFEY
Catholic University, Washington, D. C.

I don't like to talk about race prejudice. It is a nasty subject and shouldn't be discussed in polite company. Indeed, race hatred is viler than sodomy because it is a sin against an even more important virtue, charity being a greater obligation than purity.

Nevertheless, I am going to discuss race prejudice now, disgusting as the subject is, on account of the decent people who have such prejudice, through no great fault of their own. We live in a nasty atmosphere of hatred and intolerance. Even upright and honest people are unwittingly infected. I want to warn them against this infection just as a physician warns decent people against foul diseases which they may innocently contract, if they are careless.

TRUE AMERICANISM

To such decent people I say, "Stop and think." You are proud of being American citizens, proud because you belong to a country that recognizes fundamental human rights, irrespective of race, creed or political preference. This American creed is a sacred and beautiful thing for which brave men have lived and died. You love this ideal and you look with contempt on the Dictators of Europe who have discarded these fundamental principles.

There can be no doubt at all to the thinking man that race prejudice is making a mockery of our American ideal. Think for a moment of the economic status of the Negro. We boast that America is a land of opportunity: we boast that every capable and hard working man can secure, if not great wealth, at least a decent competency under our American system. We boast of this: but it doesn't mean much to the Negro. He finds it hard to get a job, he is excluded almost entirely from the more attractive forms of employment. He receives less for doing the same job for which the white man receives more. If we stand idly by and let this go on, then we are not being very true to our American principles.

Another article in the American creed says that every child should have a right to an adequate education. To this end we have built up our great system of public and parochial school and say that every American who wants an education can get one. But we don't really mean it as far as the Negro is concerned. McCuiston's classic study shows that in those states which keep a separate budget for white and colored schools, the Negro child receives per capita only a little more than one-fourth what the white child receives. Does this represent the American ideal?

Even more shocking is our attitude toward justice. On the Supreme Court in Washington these words are chiselled, "Equal Justice Under Law." Is there any intelligent American who believes that these words apply to Negroes as well as to Whites? If so he must be woefully ignorant, because inequality of the two races before the law is a shameful outrage so patent that no one could miss it. McCord in his well-known study on the subject found that, on the average, the Negro defendant receives a sentence about one-third longer for the same offense.

BEING CATHOLIC

Perhaps you are a Catholic. If so, think of this problem in relation to the teachings of your holy religion. Our Blessed Lord gave a very simple test of human relation. He said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another." (St. John 13-35.) That is pretty plain, isn't it? If we love each other, black and white, then we have a right to call ourselves followers of Christ. If we don't love each other, black and white, THEN WE SIMPLY DON'T HAVE ANY RIGHT TO CALL OURSELVES CHRISTIANS OR CATHOLICS. To call one's self a brother is simply to tell an abominable lie!

How do we measure up to this standard? It is easy for each one of us to answer the question for himself. Let him ask; Am I doing anything about the evils mentioned above? Am I doing my humble part to get equal opportunity, justice, and civil rights for the Negro? Do I treat Negroes without discrimination? That is do I give to the Negro as readily as to the white man those common courtesies which custom requires toward strangers?

Above all, am I scrupulously careful in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament not to do anything which shall make it the least bit awkward for a Negro to worship his Lord side by side with me in church?

The presence or absence of race prejudice is a fine test for the good American and the good Catholic. We don't become good Americans by flag waving and by shouting on the Fourth of July. WE BECOME GOOD AMERICANS BY SACRIFICING OURSELVES FOR THOSE PRINCIPLES FOR WHICH AMERICA STANDS, specifically for the principles of equal justice and equal opportunity for all men. We don't become good Catholics by wearing holy looks, nor by an abundance of pious prattle. We become good Catholics by living up to the great laws of the New Testament, the greatest of which is the law of love for all mankind black or white, slave or free, friend or enemy. Here is the test. It is up to us every one to measure up to it,

THE BARONESS JOTS IT DOWN

Stirrup pumps, sand, pails, splints, bandages, blackout materials. These items dance a rumba round and round my head. Being a Building Control Director in Civil Defense in Harlem is no sinecure, with forty kids and about eighteen adults on hand at every given moment, the responsibility for Air Raid Precaution becomes paramount.

Four hundred thousand people in fifty-five city blocks, housed in old inflammable tenements, must have equipment to fight fire hazard, in case we should be bombed. Preparation is essential, but every item mentioned costs money. As yet there is no appropriation made by the Government for them. Once again we must turn to Blessed Martin and to you our loyal friends.

WE ARE OPENING A FUND FOR THEM, AN ARP FUND WE CALL IT, FOR THE HARLEM FRONT. WILL YOU HELP US TO GET THE WEAPONS OF PROTECTION FOR OUR CHILDREN? EVERY PENNY WILL HELP.

And so the incredible has happened . . . WE ARE GOING TO PRESS. Since we want Catholic America to read and to know about their brother the Negro, his courage, endurance, hardships and needs will you, our readers, become an Auxiliary Fighter in the War for Christian Justice, and get us five more readers? THE SUBSCRIPTION PRICE IS ONLY FIFTY CENTS A YEAR.

AND SPEAKING OF AUXILIARY FIGHTERS, all of us at Friendship House had an idea. Now that things are going to be hard, why couldn't we have Auxiliary Friendship House Groups, organized throughout the country? We have friends in every state of the union, and so we are suggesting to our friends that they might form little groups, composed of their friends. These friends of Friendship House could tax themselves ten cents a month and send the proceeds to Friendship House. A dollar a month will help no end here in Harlem, where every dollar does the work of three, even in these times. Also our little groups could collect for us precious clothing, religious articles, books and magazines. It can be done. Why not do it???

WE MUST HELP EVERYONE—ABROAD AND AT HOME. LET US NOT FORGET HOME. HARLEM IS HOME.

Above all, let us pray, together, for peace with justice, for each other and for our enemies. Pray for us, dear friends, and give us the great privilege of praying for you.

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HARLEM FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS

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IT HAPPENS AGAIN

INCREDIBLE AS IT MAY SEEN, WE ARE ACTUALLY GOING TO PRESS, just as ten years ago it seemed as incredible that we actually had started Friendship House, in two rooms in the dreary slums of distant Toronto in Canada.

The incredible always seems to happen to those who see life as a glorious adventure with God.

For four long years we have been hoping and praying that some day we might do just what we are doing, GO TO PRESS, with a little Newspaper of our own. A tiny, little, homey Newspaper like Friendship House itself, which always has been the Portinula, or little portion, of the Lords big Vinyard. Last May in trembling and in fear we started the Friendship House News, as a small mimeographed paper, not daring to hope that it ever could have a subscription list big enough to justify GOING TO PRESS. Today in less than a year . . . IT HAS HAPPENED, God is good.

Some might point out that this is hardly the time to start printing anything, especially a Newspaper, because of the War and priorities on paper. In most cases we would have agreed but not in this one. Small and humble as our paper is it has nailed its flag to the masthead of Catholic Action which has for its foundation the Doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. In Season and out of Season we intend to reiterate the application of this Doctrine. That is why we have dared to go to print . . . in the face of War and priorities.

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE CREED

If there is a field in the U. S. A. today that needs the application of these doctrines, it is the Negro field, in which we are privileged to work. Therefore our primary purpose in going to press will be to fight for the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God and to stress these principles, aims and goals of the work of Friendship House. They are fundamentally very simple for they are the principles of our Catholic Faith itself.

We believe in the application of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ without compromise to the Negro. We believe and work for the first point that flows from that Doctrine—Interracial Justice.

We believe and work for the broader aspects of Christian Social Justice as expounded by the encyclicals of the Popes, which includes Interracial Justice.

We believe that these two integrated aspects of justice are part and parcel of that Christian Social Reconstruction without which the world of tomorrow will be in chaos, and Catholics back in the catacombs.

We believe that Catholics have the answer to ALL modern problems, and we aim to devote ourselves, under the guidance of the hierarchy, to applying these teachings to our own lives, and to the lives of the people with whom we work. Since we are our brother's keeper, we realize that while we are working on the long range effects of the apostolate of Christ, we must also answer the needs of the moment so acute among the people with whom we work. We therefore engage ourselves in the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, which answer best the immediate need.

The foundation of all works, short or long range, for our life itself, is daily mass and communion. All things can be done only in Christ, thru Christ and for Christ, and he is easiest found in the Liturgy of the church. In the Liturgy he teaches us the width and breadth, the height and depth of the principles outlined above. He gives to us, weak and small as we are, the strength to carry on against all odds.

That is why, with simple trust in God and the Holy Ghost, we are going to press today in the midst of War and Priorities. These are awesome days of total warfare. days when the World needs Christ and His teachings more than ever. Thirteen Million American Negroes have yet to be convinced of Democracy and the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of Christ.

Catholics who believe in a God who died for all races and nationalities, must be the first to lead and show the rest of white America that in view of the Incarnation and death on the cross of Christ, the least that they can do is to live with the Negro, as behooved the followers of the Crucified brothers.

To this leadership and works Friendship House News dedicates itself, as did for four long years Friendship house itself and its workers. Our little paper comes to you, dear friends of many years, with an encouraging work from our own Archbishop Francis J. Spellman of New York, whose love for the Negro and Interracial justice is well known through all America. He said to us the other day when we were discussing some of our problems with him, "I see by the last mimeographed number of Friendship House News that you are going to print it next month. That is good. We shall send you a donation toward the printing bill."

INCREDIBLE AS IT MIGHT SEEM WE ARE ACTUALLY GOING TO PRESS, AND WITH AN ENCOURAGING WORD FROM HIS EXCELLENCY HIMSELF. GOD INDEED IS GOOD, AND THE INCREDIBLE ALWAYS HAPPENS TO PEOPLE WHO SEE LIFE AS A GLORIOUS ADVENTURE WITH GOD.

"Heirs of the same sin and the same weaknesses, but heirs also of the same original greatness, all created in the image of God and all called to the same supernatural dignity as adopted sons of God, and to co-heirship with Christ the Savior, all redeemed by the same life-giving Blood, and thus destined to become equals of the angels in heaven, what Christian can look upon man with the demented gaze of racist pride? The Unity of mankind is at the basis of Christianity."
"Ransoming the Time." Maritain—Pub. by Scribner's

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE

A Negro Student at St. John's University looks at FRIENDSHIP HOUSE, and discovers why it's different.
(Reprinted from the St. John Quarterly Vol. 4, No. 2, 1941)

Friendship House is just another social agency which is doing wonderful work among the Negroes in Harlem, only it's Catholic!

At least that is the approximate idea which most Catholics have about Friendship House. They may know that the Baroness Catherine de Hueck is the spearhead of the work, perhaps even know a little about her life. Few, however, see beyond that. Unfortunately the majority of the articles appearing in Catholic periodicals have only lent colour to this mistaken idea; they have all stressed the unimportant items, quoted meaningless statistics and left unsaid factors which make Friendship House.

The place itself consists of only five stores and two tenement flats. The Catholic Youth Organization located there has no more than a scant 350 members, if that many. It distributes clothing three days a week, but very few of the people find proper fits among the dresses, the suits and the half-worn-out shoes which are the only clothing available there. On the whole Friendship House materially aids about one thousand people a year. The literature it distributes does not bring a stream of converts into St. Marks parish. It is not a startling success compared with other agencies.

The municipal playgrounds, the state social agencies, and the WPA recreational centers because of their superior equipment and more experienced supervisors can claim to have accomplished as much if not more. We do not want to discredit the work done by Friendship House in the past four years; it has done much good, but it cannot be judged merely as a social agency.

Is Friendship House primarily important because of its interracial character? One person was heard to remark, "Isn't it wonderful the way the Baroness and her Staff give up their way of life to live with and do such marvelous things for those poor Negroes!" If this sentiment expresses the only *raison d'être* of Friendship House it could not even vie with the 27 Communist organizations in Harlem for the faith of the Negroes, for the latter's program is based on a more practical and acceptable feature than mere pity for the lot of the Negro in American society.

THEN WHAT IS FRIENDSHIP HOUSE?

Friendship House is a Way of life, a Community, a dynamo of spiritual energy based on the only source of all Christ Life, the Mass.

The Negro in Harlem has faced the problems of the poor man anywhere—poverty, unemployment and insecurity, doubly embittered by race discrimination; segregation resulting in poor housing, exorbitant rents, lack of recreational centers, etc. A rich field for the materialistic doctrines of Communism! Is it any wonder that a people

so crushed should lose faith in God and man?

Friendship House recognizes this problem to be moral and ethical, not economical and political. It uses the only weapon effective, spiritual—Mass, corporate Communion, and the Liturgy. Through these come a better understanding of the Mystical Body, which in turn leads to Christian sociology, which is the cornerstone of Christian social reconstruction.

Friendship House draws its uniqueness from the fact that it is one of the few lay organizations whose members are actively engaged in not only perfecting themselves through the Mass and the Liturgy in Christ but also assisting others to do the same. Indeed in this respect it is enhanced still further because of its interracial character. Through it the Negro is finding a reawakening of faith; a spiritual rebirth of the faith which burned so vividly through three hundred years of slavery and which has stamped itself indelibly on American culture through spirituals.

Here in Friendship House you find a



unity of purpose which stands in sharp contrast to the background of people of all walks and interests of life. Lawyers, stenographers, carpenters, electricians, teachers, seminarians, artist, accountants, writers, housewives, laborers, salesgirls, nurses, college students, social workers—people from every conceivable occupation work in harmony toward a common end. How can people with such a diversity of background—cultural, educational, racial, economic, social—work efficiently and congenially together in a project like Friendship House if there were no unity, not only of interest but in themselves? Participation in Catholic Action not only helps them to love Christ in every one else, whether connected with himself but helps them to love Christ through Friendship House.

It is this divine love which has given Friendship House Unity and which has contributed enormously to Friendship House's growth. There are many instances of people coming to visit the project and then staying to become part of it. A young lady came to volunteer her time as a full time worker

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STAFF REPORTER

By M. K. J.

The real-honest-to-goodness newspaper that we have threatened you with for so long is now a reality. We hounded people for copy. We battled our way through a ream of galley sheets and we became wild-eyed-trying to figure our layout. We got through it somehow with the help of the saints and the cooperation of many kind people. So here it is. The Friendship House News in print. We hope you like it.

Before going to press we looked over a lot of material that had been written for us about three years ago when the FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS was just an idea in the fertile brain of the Baroness. We noticed how very obsolete most of the articles were, or at least those dealing with the physical aspects of Friendship House. Articles written on the philosophy of Friendship House aren't affected by time. Our basic principle was and is, as you all know, the full application of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body to the Negro, without compromise.

You know, too, that during the last three years we grew and grew. We got new Clubrooms, a clothing room and Madonna Flat. We also collected many Staff Workers who came to us. Some of them stayed a while and then left, others remained.

It might seem that because we have had many people come to us and leave we have failed in some way. But such is not case. The effect that Friendship House has had on the lives of the people it has touched cannot be measured. Staff Workers may come and go. They may stay for six months or two years or four and discover that they do not have a vocation to this work. They may enter a religious order, they might get married, or they may take a job. But whether they are aware of it or not while they are here they soak up a tremendous amount of knowledge and acquire a new concept of life.

The new concept of life to most of us was seeing Christ in the Negro. Now to all of us at Friendship House there is no such thing as color line. Negroes and Whites are people, both made in the image and likeness of Christ. With this faith, people leaving Friendship House have the power to carry on the good fight in breaking down the race prejudice they meet in the world.

Friendship House is an invaluable preparation for practically any job one might want to take after working and living here. It gives, free of charge, a Doctorate degree in social, recreational and office work. It is virgin territory for writers. It gives one an M. A. in the art of living with people. It is good training for the Religious life or the married state.

It seems to us that one of the most valuable phases of the work at Friendship House is the work it doesn't expect to do. We are small and probably not too efficient as far as settlement houses go. We are novel only in that we live in Harlem and try to practice what we preach.

But the marvelous part about Friendship House is that it not only gives tangible assistance to the poor in Harlem, but it

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(FRIENDSHIP HOUSE—concluded)

in Friendship House for the three months before she was to enter a convent; she stayed a year before leaving for the convent. Two weeks after she left she returned—and this time to stay! Another instance involved a young lady who came to see if the Baroness Catherine de Hueck could get her a job. The Baroness invited her to stay for a while; that was over two years ago. The same person is still there, manifesting no desire to leave. Still another striking case is that of a writer from a prominent New York magazine who came to see Friendship House and to interview the Baroness in order to write an article about it. For the past four months he has spent a goodly portion of his leisure time there, contributing much in labor and money. They are many other people there, who when they first came, had no intention of staying. They came and before they realized it they were part of it. Christ lures them there through natural curiosity and makes them stay to contribute their share in the apostolate and at the same time to help lead other souls to Him.

It would take a book of considerable size to tell the whole story of Friendship House. However, even that would be insufficient, because no one will know the beauty of the simple lives of the people who are Friendship House and the widespread effects of it on the community unless he sees it himself. There are some things which are beyond the scope of human expression. This article is confined to those supernatural aspects which are responsible for the existence and development of Friendship House; Christ, Mass, Liturgy, Divine Love and unity. Friendship House is certainly beyond the limits of human insight and comprehension, for it is the manifestation of Christ in human beings and in work. FRIENDSHIP HOUSE IS CATHOLIC ACTION.

HERB McKNIGHT

(STAFF REPORTER—concluded)

helps spiritually and materially ALL volunteer and Staff Workers who come in contact with it. This applies both to the Negro and the White.

Fallens away Catholics have found a lost faith through Friendship House. Others have ceased to be Sunday Catholics and have become daily Communicants. Some have been converted. White have not only learned to love the Negro, but the Negro has come to understand the white. For many it has been the perfect medium for expressing their ideas, it has given them poise and a 'reason for being.' It demands sacrifice and selfish people have become selfless. The 'by-products' of Friendship House are countless. Friendship House has been the answer in a hundred ways to as many people.

It doesn't really matter whether Staff Workers come and stay for ever or whether they leave Friendship House. Those that stay find happiness in the service of humanity. Those that leave are better men and women for having been here. They have seen Christ in the Negro, and they have learned to live a practical Catholic life which is the only solution for living in a world of materials spiritual blackouts.

IT'S A MATTER OF OPINION

New York City

Dear Miss Jerdo,

I have been very interested in the Friendship House News, ever since I received my first copy last May. To me, the work of Friendship House itself seems so vitally necessary that I could not fail to commend you for the good you are doing not only in day to day aid but in the field of education.

When you asked for suggestions to improve the News last month, I began to think about various things I should like to know, and others which might better be left unsaid. The whole interracial question is one which challenges society today. It is not simple. A solution will require the use of every means, religious, economic, social and psychological. Forgive me if I say that I feel you sometimes over-simplify things with an approach that is sentimental.

I admire Friendship House because it is not only treating the symptoms of racial difficulty but because it is going to the source by trying to build up compatible interracial living. Surely, there are many things you could tell us, which we could 'sink our teeth in', so to speak. Let's hear more about housing, unemployment, actual discrimination the Negro is facing, and the insidious effect of an apathetic white society. These are the tools which will help to spread your movement.

Sincerely yours,

J. S.

Forestville, Connecticut

Dear Flewey:

Please don't try to cramp the Baroness' style. She does present Friendship House and your work in a very dramatic way, but without self-consciousness, and we like it. After all, she is a dramatic, dynamic person, and it will probably take a lot of dramatics and fireworks to wake us up. I think the dramatization of the empty coat hangers in the February issue of the News was particularly effective and I hope it sent many of your readers scurrying through their clothes closets to dig out sweaters and skirts and blouses and what-nots that they don't really need, and that their enthusiasm didn't die until they had them boxed up and shipped to Harlem.

I understand how you feel, Flewey, you are afraid we will think you are looking for praise. Of course you are not. Who would endure bedbugs merely for praise? (I am glad we know about the bedbugs).

But understatement is effective, too, so let's have something of yours for the sake of variety. We do not all present things in the same way, but as long as a thing has the ring of truth, it is good. The Baroness wouldn't know how to be cool and factual; please don't let her try.

You asked for this, you know.

Sincerely yours,

G. C. H.

We are never satisfied. We wanted a thousand subscriptions so that we could print the FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS. Now we want a thousand more so that we can continue printing it. Will you help us? You can do it by interesting your friends in our paper and by renewing your subscription to it. Subscription price is only fifty cents a year! Maybe it's wishful thinking but if each of our present subscribers got ONE new subscriber what a wonderful circulation we'd have!

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